

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FACT SHEET

The USDA organic regulations prohibit the use of lumber treated with prohibited materials. Use of treated wood on your organic sites is considered an application of a prohibited material. However, use of treated wood may be allowed in areas that will not compromise the organic integrity of your crops or livestock.

7CFR §205.206 (f) Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard.
The producer must not use lumber treated with arsenate or other prohibited materials for new installations or replacement purposes in contact with soil or livestock.

In-row trellis systems (orchards, vineyards, etc.)

In organic and transitional sites, you must not use treated wood for any structure that will come into contact with crops or soil used to produce organic crops. Treated wood may only be used if it is located outside of the certified site. Barriers placed in the soil, such as setting treated posts into concrete or utilizing a plastic barrier, are not allowed. Certified sites must have clear boundaries and buffers established.

Fencing

You may use treated wood for fencing if the organic crop does not come into contact with the treated wood or the soil around the treated wood. In organic livestock production, animals must not be allowed contact with the treated wood or pasture in proximity to the treated wood.

End posts for wire trellises (hops, blueberries, grapes, etc.)

Treated wood end posts that do not touch the crop are allowed, provided the end posts are outside the organic site. Your organic sites must have clear boundaries and buffers.

Greenhouses

Treated wood is prohibited in greenhouses where the wood is in contact with the organic crop, roots or the soil in the area of production. Treated wood may be used if your greenhouses produce organic crops on benches in flats, pots or other approved containers provided the organic crop does not come into contact with the treated wood.

Farm Buildings

Treated wood may be used for building construction as long as contact with crops and livestock is prevented. If your livestock are housed in a barn constructed of treated wood, animals must be prevented from contacting the treated wood.

Existing treated wood within newly leased/owned sites

Organic certification requires that no prohibited materials, including treated wood, be applied in the 36 months prior to the first organic harvest date. Alternatively, your site may immediately be eligible for organic status if existing treated wood is replaced with non-treated wood or metal and all other requirements for eligibility are met.

Re-use of treated wood prohibited

Treated wood may not be re-used if removed from a production area. USDA organic regulations do not allow for the use of treated posts for new or replacement purposes. If new or re-used treated wood is installed within your organic site, the site will need to re-transition. It will be eligible for organic status after 36 months from the date on which you installed the treated wood.

Treated Wood Uses and Compliance for Organic Certification

Additional Resources

National Organic Program Draft Guidance 5036 on Treated Lumber

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/NOP%205036%20Treated%20Lumber%20Draft%20Guidance.pdf>



WSDA Organic Program
PO Box 42560 | Olympia WA 98504-2560
(360) 902-1805 | organic@agr.wa.gov
<http://agr.wa.gov/organic>